

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ A method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method ~~being such that, comprising:~~

prior to the communication of the information, a service unit of the communications system is contacted and a request for the communication of the information is thereupon passed to the service unit,

wherein the service unit passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, and the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator,

the service unit, prompts the electronic agents, once or several times, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information,

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an offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to ~~such a~~the prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, is confirmed to ~~this~~the electronic agent by the service unit as having been accepted,

the service unit initiates the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom ~~this~~the electronic agent is assigned, and

~~this~~the electronic agent communicates negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to the network management unit of ~~this~~the network operator.

2. (currently amended) ~~Method~~The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests the establishment of a communication connection between a calling terminal and one or more called terminals for the communication of the information via ~~this~~the communication connection.

3. (currently amended) ~~Method~~The method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests connectionless communication of information from a first terminal to one or more second terminals.

4. (currently amended) ~~Method~~The method according to Claim 1, wherein, with a prompt to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, the

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service unit specifies to the two or more electronic agents one or more conditions for this communication.

5. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 4, wherein the service unit successively alters one or more of the conditions, respectively associated with prompts, until one of the electronic agents submits an offer.

6. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, wherein the offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to ~~such a~~ the prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, specifies to the service unit one or more conditions for ~~this~~ the communication.

7. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 4, wherein one or more conditions specify the nature and manner of the communication of the information.

8. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 4, wherein one or more conditions specify the charging of the communication of the information.

9. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, wherein offers submitted by electronic agents in response to ~~such a~~ the prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, relate only to a partial communication of the

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information and the service unit confirms several ~~such~~ offers, so that a complete communication of the information results.

10. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the strategy of the network operator in respect of other network operators.

11. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the network loading of the network operator.

12. (currently amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, wherein electronic agents register themselves on the electronic marketplace for information communication and only registered electronic agents receive prompts from the service unit.

13. (currently amended) ~~Service~~ A service unit, embodied in a computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer carry out a method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, ~~wherein the service unit is designed so that~~ the method comprising:

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when a request for the communication of information is passed to ~~it~~the service agent, ~~it~~the service agent passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication,

wherein, the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator,

~~the service unit is furthermore designed so that~~the service unit prompting electronic agents, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, ~~it prompts electronic agents~~, once or several times, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information,

~~the service unit is furthermore designed so that~~confirming an offer, submitted by one of the electronic agents, ~~in response to such a request as~~having been accepted, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, ~~is confirmed to this electronic agent by it as having been accepted~~, and

~~the service unit is furthermore designed so that it initiates~~the service unit initiating the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom ~~this~~the electronic agent is assigned.

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14. (currently amended) ~~Software product~~ A computer readable storage medium encoded with program code for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the ~~software product~~ computer readable storage medium is designed so that, in its execution on a server, ~~it~~ the computer readable storage medium performs the function of ~~a~~ the service unit according to Claim 13.

15. (currently amended) ~~Server~~ A server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises ~~control means~~ a computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer ~~which are designed so that they perform~~ the functions of ~~a~~ the service unit according to Claim 13.

16. (currently amended) ~~Electronic~~ An electronic agent, embodied in a computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer carry out a method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method comprising:
~~wherein the electronic agent is designed so that it interacts~~ interacting, within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, with a service unit which passes to ~~it~~ requests to the electronic agent for the communication of information ~~and~~,

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making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, ~~makes decisions~~, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria which are specified by a network operator to whom ~~it~~ the electronic agent is assigned, and

~~the electronic agent is furthermore designed so that when it is prompted by the service unit, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, it~~ the electronic agent makes a decision, by means of the decision logic, according to the criteria, to submit or not to submit an offer in response to ~~this~~ the prompt, and

~~the electronic agent is furthermore designed so that when~~ communicates negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom the electronic agent is assigned, to a network management unit of the network operator, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, when an offer submitted by ~~it~~ the electronic agent is confirmed to it by the service unit as having been accepted, ~~it communicates the negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom it is assigned to a network management unit of this network operator.~~

17. (currently amended) ~~Software product~~ A computer readable storage medium encoded with program code for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the ~~software product~~ computer readable storage medium is designed so that,

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in its execution on a server, it the computer readable storage medium performs the function of an the electronic agent according to Claim 16.

18. (currently amended) ~~Server~~ A server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises ~~control means~~ a computer readable storage medium storing a control program to have a computer ~~which are designed so that they perform~~ the functions of an the electronic agent according to Claim 16.